AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows.

In the Claims:

Claim 1 (original)

1. A thickener comprising polyurethanes, water, at least one viscosity regulator, and, optionally, at least one organic solvent, wherein said viscosity regulator comprises at least one compound of the general formula (I)

$$R^1\text{-}O\text{-}(SO)_a\text{-}(EO)_b\text{-}(PO)_c\text{-}(BO)_d\text{-}(DTO)_e\text{-}R^2 \qquad (I)$$

in which

R^1 and R^2 independently of one another are one of the radicals selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or heteroatoms, an aromatic radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains heteroatoms, an acyl radical, a carboxyacyl radical, and a carboxyalkyl radical,

SO = styrene oxide radical,

EO = ethylene oxide radical,

PO = propylene oxide radical,

BO = butylene oxide radical, and

DTO = dodecene oxide and/or tetradecene oxide (as the individual substance or as a mixture),

a = 1 to 5,

b = 3 to 30,

c = 0 to 5,

d = 0 to 5,

e = 0 to 5

where

$(a + c + d + e) <= b$.

Claim 2 (original)

2. The thickener as claimed in claim 1, wherein the viscosity regulators comprises at least one compound of the general formula (I) in which R^1 is a radical selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or contains heteroatoms, and an aromatic radical which optionally is substituted and optionally contains heteroatoms.

Claim 3 (original)

3. The thickener as claimed in claim 1, wherein the viscosity regulator comprises at least one compound of the general formula (I) in which R^2 is a radical selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or contains heteroatoms, an aromatic radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains heteroatoms, an acyl radical, a carboxyacyl radical, and a carboxyalkyl radical.

Claim 4 (original)

4. The thickener as claimed in claim 1, wherein said viscosity regulator comprises at least one compound of the general formula (I) in which R^1 is a radical selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or contains heteroatoms, and an aromatic radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains heteroatoms and R^2 is a radical selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or contains heteroatoms, an acyl radical, a carboxyacyl radical, and a carboxyalkyl radical.

Claim 5 (original)

5. The thickener as claimed in claim 1, wherein said viscosity regulator comprises at least one compound of the general formula (I) in which R^1 is a radical selected from the group

consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or contains heteroatoms, and an aromatic radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains heteroatoms and R^2 is hydrogen.

Claim 6 (original)

6. A thickener comprising

a) from about 10 to about 80 parts by weight of a polyurethane-based thickener,

b) from 0 to about 80 parts by weight of water such that the sum of (a) + (b) + (c) + (d) = 100,

c) from 0 to about 50 parts by weight of an organic solvent, and

d) from about 5 to about 80 parts by weight of a viscosity regulator of the general formula (I)

$$R^1\text{-}O\text{-}(SO)_a\text{-}(EO)_b\text{-}(PO)_c\text{-}(BO)_d\text{-}(DTO)_e\text{-}R^2$$

in which

R^1 and R^2 independently of one another are one of the radicals from the group consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which is optionally substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or contains heteroatoms, an aromatic radical, which is optionally substituted and optionally contains heteroatoms, an acyl radical, a carboxyacyl radical, and a carboxyalkyl radical,

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DTO = dodecene oxide and/or tetradecene oxide (as the individual substance or as a mixture),

a = 1 to 5,

b = 3 to 30,

c = 0 to 5,

d = 0 to 5,

e = 0 to 5

where

$(a + c + d + e) <= b$.

Claim 7 (original)

7. An ink which comprises a pigment and a thickener according to claim 1.

Claim 8 (original)

8. A paint which comprises a pigment and a thickener according to claim 1.

Claim 9 (original)

9. A coating composition which comprises a polyurethane thickener and a thickener according to claim 1.

Claim 10 (currently amended)

10. A method for reducing the viscosity in a coating composition containing polyurethane or an ink containing polyurethane which comprises adding to the coating composition or ink, at least one viscosity regulator of the formula

$$R^1\text{-}O\text{-}(SO)_a\text{-}(EO)_b\text{-}(PO)_c\text{-}(BO)_d\text{-}(DTO)_e\text{-}R^2 \qquad (I)$$

in which

R^1 and R^2 independently of one another are one of the radicals selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon radical, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains multiple bonds and/or heteroatoms, an aromatic radical, which optionally is substituted optionally contains heteroatoms, an acyl radical, a carboxyacyl radical, and a carboxyalkyl radical,

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a = 1 to 5,

b = 3 to 30,

c = 0 to 5,

d = 0 to 5,

e = 0 to 5

where

$(a + c + d + e) <= b$.